

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 AID-05 ACDA-07 OMB-01
IGA-02 TRSE-00 L-03 MC-02 DODE-00 EB-07 EUR-12
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R 090637Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7397
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 3172

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, ML, NG, US
SUBJ: MILIAN REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING
REF: STATE 158083

1. SUMMARY. NIGER WOULD LIKELY HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH ASSISTANCE TO MALI ON A CASE WHICH HAS BEEN REQUESTED BUT WOULD CERTAINLY EXPECT U.S. TO BE AT LEAST EQUALLY FORTHCOMING ON REQUEST FROM MODERATE AND FRIENDLY REGIMES. WE ARE PLEASED THAT DEPARTMENT IS LOOKING AT THIS REQUEST FROM REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE.

2. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, KOUNTCHE INCLUDES MALI ON LIST OF NEIGHBORS HE MISTRUSTS. PRESIDENT DOES NOT WORRY ABOUT AGGRESSION FROM MALI PER SE. BUT HE REGARDS TRAORE REGIME AS FRAGILE AND IS MOST APPREHENSIVE ABOUT WHAT HE PERCEIVES AS PERNICIOUS SOVIET INVOLVEMENT WITH IT. PRESUMABLY, THEREFORE, HE WOULD NOT REACT ADVERSELY TO OUR UNDERCONFIDENTIAL

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TAKING SOME KIND OF BALANCING EVEN THOUGH MINOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE ROLE. AS A MILITARY MAN, HE KNOWS THAT EQUIPMENT LIKE PARACHUTES HAVE TO COME FROM SOMEWHERE AND PILOTS HAVE TO BE TRAINED. OUTSIDE HELP, THEREFORE, IS REQUIRED AND BETTER FROM U.S. THAN SOVIETS, WOULD BE KOUNCHES VIEW.

3. AT THE SAME TIME, FROM THE PFC PECTIVE OF BILATERAL

U.S.-NIGER RELATIONS, IT IS NOT IN OUR INTEREST TO DO ANYTHING IN REGION WHICH WOULD WHET APPETITE FOR U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE HERE WHICH WE COULD NOT ASSUAGE. IN KOUNTCHES PERIODIC TALKS WITH US ABOUT HIS SECRUTIIY PROBLEMS, SUBJECT MF U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE HAS NEVER IFOME UP. WE WOULD LIKE TO KEEP IT THAT WAY. A U.S. PROGRAM IN MALI WOULD, HOWEVER, AT LEAST INCREASE THE CHANCES THAT NIGER MIGHT ASK FOR SOME KIND OF ASSISTANCE. SUCH A REQUEST WOULD IN THAT EVENT BE BOLSTERED WI Q THE ARGUMENT THAT THIS IS A MORE MODERATE REGIME AND ONE WHICH IS EXCEPTIONALLY DISPOSED TO THE U.S.--A POINT DIFFICULT TO DENY.

4. WE WOULD HOPE, THEREFORE, AT DMIZMUM THAT THOUGHT DEPARTMENT GIVES TO MALIAN REQUEST BE IN CONTEXT OF WHAT WE ARE WILLING TO DO ON A REGIONAL BASIS FOR FREINDLY REGIMES. A DECISION TO PROVIDE RUN-OF-THE-MILL NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT OR TRAINING, FOR EXAMPLE, SHOULD BE CLEARLY APPLICABLE TO MALI'S MODERATE NEIGHBORS AS WELL. SUCH A LIST OF ITEMS WE ARE WILLING TO PROVIDE OR SELL COULD, FROM POINT-OF-VIEW OF NIGER, MOST USEFULLY INCLUDE RESUMPTION OF MILITARY ORIENTATION TOURS ZHICH WERE ENORMOUSLY PRODUCTIVE IN 1960S AND PAID HANDSOME POLITICAL DIVIDENDS WITH NIGERS PRESENT MILITARY LEADERS, SEVERAL OF WHOM INDICATE TO US INDIRECTLY THEY WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO SEE THIS PROGRAM RESUMED. JAMES

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